OPINION

A Social Gazetteer's View: Welcome to this space...and more

VINCENT DIXON | A HISTORY OF

August 11, 2025 . 1:59 PM — 4 min read

Visit of Gov. Samuel W. McCall of Massachusetts to Halifax, Nov. 8-10, 1918. During his brief sojourn in Halifax, McCall was photographed with children and several members of the Relief Committee. COURTESY PHOTO/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS/HALIFAX RELIEF COMMISSION/GAUVIN & GENTZEL

Welcome to this space — My regular contribution, hopefully mo informing, challenging, and sharing some thinking about a world, where

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rationality can serve an active role, in a world of chaos.

My own background, is often thought to be interesting, challenging, even a bit inspiring, as I had parents, who were early pioneers, in home schooling, and in many other ways, as well. This schooling, led me towards being an historian, who respects the dynamic of current events, and their ceaseless evolution into various historical accounts; and their influence on civics, civic literacy, and more.

This column, hopefully gives you, the reader, an encouragement, to feel that I, as an experienced columnist, will provide useful information, in a respectful way; even while I may challenge your views, my own views, and the apparently confused reality of our broader world.

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Winchester News welcomes Vincent Lawrence Dixon as one of its new columnists. COURTESY PHOTO/VINCENT L. DIXON

I choose the word *Gazetteer*, to introduce a literate dictionary encouraging engagement with language, that might befit, the late Russell Baker. Baker, an excellent writer, and reporter, gradually developed into a great humorist, a flavor of which, can be captured by the title of a late in life work of his, noted in his Britannica Encyclopedia biography:

"In 2002 he published 'Looking Back: Heroes, Rascals, and Other Icons of the American Imagination.'"

Surely, the United States, and Massachusetts, and even Winchester, have had heroes, rascals, self-appointed, and/or otherwise designated.

In noting heroes, two great governors of Massachusetts, lived much of their public lives, in Winchester, Gov. Samuel McCall, and Gov. John A. Volpe, both of whom, inspired many, saved lives, and influenced good actions taken in, and for, our town, and well beyond.

McCall, is best known for his relief expedition to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1917, after a terrible explosion that devastated that important community. The wonderful gesture of Nova Scotia, yearly sending of a Christmas tree, that is erected on Boston Common, is but a modest cosmetic, for a tremendous gesture by Massachusetts.

McCall did a lot more as well, and was largely responsible for the last Constitutional Convention of Massachusetts, in 1917-1918, and the lengthening of the governor's term, from one year, to two years.

Along the way, McCall was a significant writer, journalist, and thinker; hopefully, my words may contribute to such efforts, in our own present time.

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Volpe, is known for many actions, including lifting the railroad crossing, at Winchester Center, which has undoubtedly saved many lives, and avoided uncounted accidents. Along the journey of a long, and productive life, Volpe, was appointed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, to be in charge of developing the Interstate Highway System.

Volpe's engagement in Massachusetts government, also led to major reform, including the creation of our state cabinet, and extending the term of governor, from two years, to four years. He also served as U.S. Secretary of Transportation, and U.S. Ambassador to Italy, in a remarkable career.

The condensation of media, including the collapse of much of the print media, the distinct weakening of local coverage, and the concentration of media power by mergers, acquisitions, purchases, and other social phenomena, is contributing to the weakening of our society.

As Americans move about, hounded by tidal waves of increasing costs in housing, and declines in big city, metropolitan mass transit; it is ever more important that individuals, and families, can access local news, and opinion.

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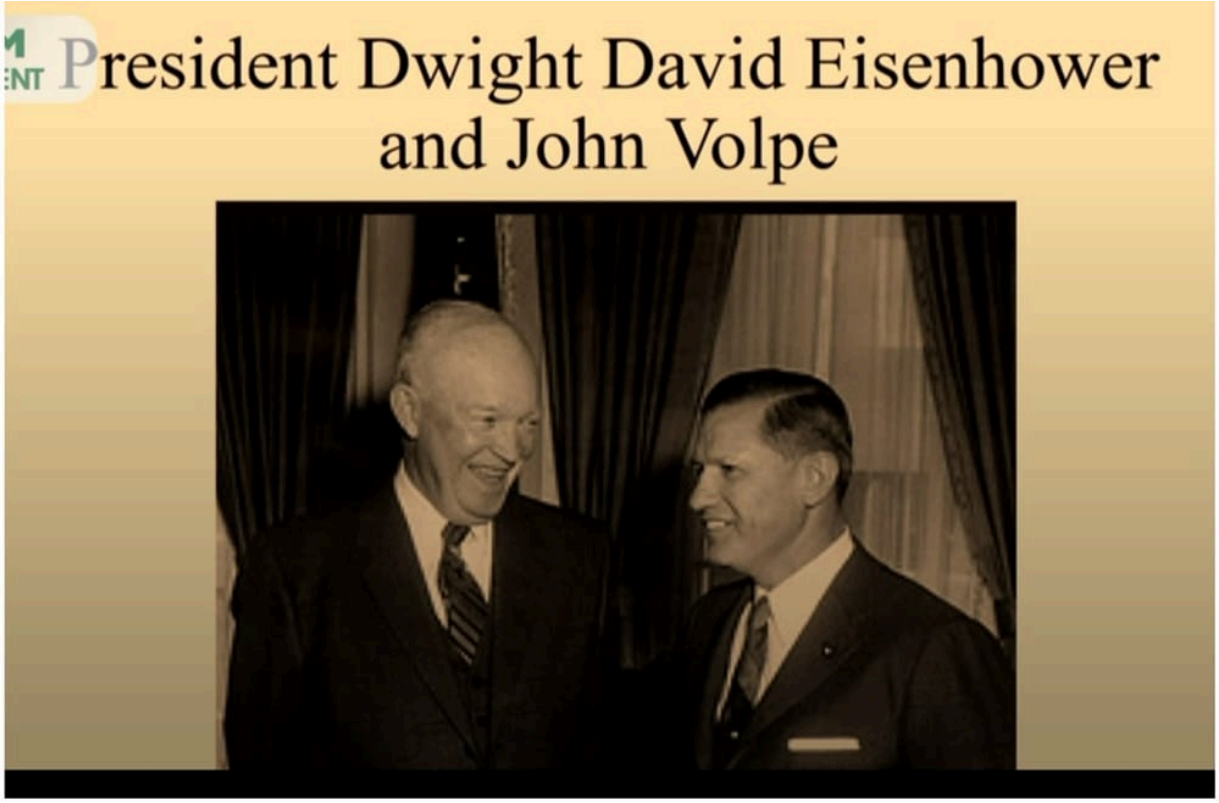

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, left, with Mass. Gov. John D. Volpe. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER TOWN MEETING/WINCAM

While Winchester News, is distinctly online, it represents one of many newer responses, to the challenges of reporting local news, informing our residents, our citizenry, and our newest neighbors, of vital information, and hopefully, with a friendly, and constructive flavor.

Towns, such as Winchester, still with Representative Town Meetings, and almost entirely volunteer decision making elected offices, as their front door; are where we, and in which, much of our surrounding communities live.

Of course, we are influenced by the larger cities, of Boston, Cambridge, and other places; and this does, and should reflect that Massachusetts, is a Commonwealth, that suggests, and sometimes behaves as a state, where we have much in common. What we have in common, and how we might challenge each other, are among those aspects, that this column will seek to address.

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Welcome to what I hope, can be a "multilogue".... More than just a dialogue, of screaming across at each other, but efforts to share information, ideas, and worthwhile thinking.

Vincent Lawrence "Vince" Dixon, is an historian, political activist, and small business oriented resident of Winchester; and appreciator of all friends, those he knows, and those he has yet to meet. He can be reached with further comment, and suggestions at: vincedixon99@yahoo.com.

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OPINION

Salvation Army thanks Winchester for Red Kettle Campaign support

To the Editor: As we begin 2026, The Salvation Army Massachusetts Division would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the residents, businesses, and volunteers in the Winchester area who supported the

OPINION

Yes, Virginia...There is a Santa Claus

Editor's Note: Francis P. Church's editorial, "Yes Virginia, There is a Santa Claus" first appeared in The New York Sun in 1897, and was reprinted annually unt paper went out of business.

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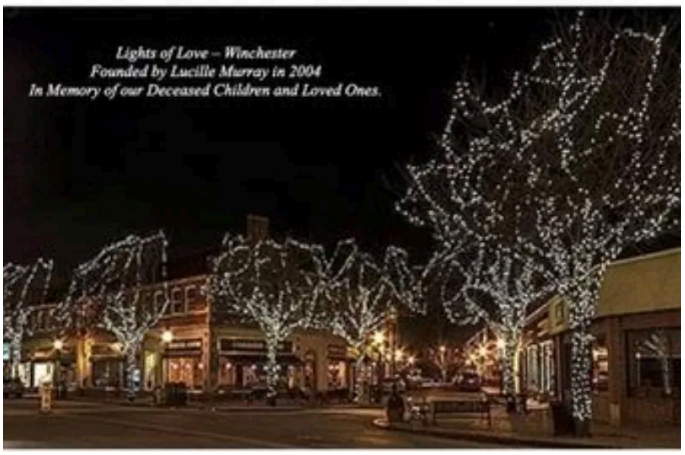
2025 Red Kettle Campaign. Your generosity and kindness during the holiday season brought comfort, hope, and tangible support

February 10, 2026

appeared, it was an immediate sensation, and became one of

December 25, 2025



OPINION

'Lights of Love' in Winchester looking for donations this holiday season

Dear friends and supporters: My husband and I founded the "Lights of Love" – Winchester in 2004. For more than two decades, the "Lights of Love" has illuminated our Town Center and downtown area all year round – a glowing tribute in memory of our deceased children, family members and friends whose

December 9, 2025

OPINION

The return of the winter paunch is nothing to worry about — Just ask any squirrel

Over the past couple of weeks there's been a familiar seasonal sighting around our Dublin house. The object in question usually appears when I'm stepping into the shower or getting ready for bed, and it's a 100% reliable sign that summer and autumn have ended and colder

STEVE CORONELLA | FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

December 1, 2025

Latest

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NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER
March 4, 2026

FEATURES

'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On

NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

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The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and

Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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